

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: AMR 53/005/2009 (Public)  
17 July 2009

### **Venezuela: Political will and resources still needed to end domestic violence**

Yesterday, 16 July 2009, one year after the launch of its report *The Law is there, let's use it: ending domestic violence in Venezuela*, Amnesty International presented thousands of signatures to the Venezuelan authorities, showing the national and international support for its campaign "Violence against women is a crime."

At a meeting in Caracas, Amnesty International Venezuela presented more than 8,000 signatures to Deputy Marelis Pérez, President of the National Assembly's Permanent Commission on the Family, Women and Youth, requesting national authorities to fully implement the Organic Law on the Rights of Women to a Life Free of Violence, 2007. The signatures of citizens from Venezuela and a wide range of countries, including Germany, Australia, Brazil, Greece, Iceland, Slovenia, South Africa and Uruguay were collected in recent months. The petition calls on the Venezuelan government to take the measures necessary to guarantee women's access to their human rights.

One of the petition's main points is the urgent need to set up shelters for women fleeing from abusive relationships. The Organic Law (article 32) places an obligation on national, state and local governments to build a shelter within each of their dependencies.

The Organic Law (article 26) also states that the Ministry of the Interior and Justice must guarantee that law enforcement officials receive training on how to apply the legislation and how to deal with victims of domestic violence. The shortcomings of current training programmes mean that most women who want to make a complaint about ill-treatment continue to receive inadequate protection and to be denied justice and reparations.

"Deputy Marelis Pérez told us about a recent initiative to accelerate the establishment of a national network of agencies in charge of receiving complaints", said Ana Barrios, Amnesty International Venezuela's Director of Human Rights Education, Promotion and Investigation. "Our contribution is to offer support for education, training and dissemination activities."

Despite the new commitments, political will and resources are still needed to make the Organic Law of 2007 a reality and take a decisive step towards ending domestic violence in Venezuela. More than 8,000 men and women united in support of Amnesty International's call for the national, state and local governments of Venezuela to fulfil their commitment to guarantee a life free of violence for all women. Now is the time for the authorities to take this commitment seriously.

### **Background information**

The report *The Law is there, let's use it: ending domestic violence in Venezuela*, was launched on 16 July 2008, as part of a global campaign – Stop Violence Against Women. In Venezuela, the Amnesty International campaign is mainly focused on pressuring the authorities, especially the national, state and local governments, to fully implement the Organic Law on the Rights of Women to a Life Free of Violence, 2007. The law is a valuable tool to strengthen women's access to their rights and has the potential to produce real improvements in the life of thousands of women. Nonetheless, its implementation has been far from satisfactory. Particular concerns include the lack of shelters for women fleeing from abusive relationships (there are only two shelters run by national authorities) and the need to provide training programmes for police officers responsible for dealing with complaints of domestic violence.